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Pêcheur d'Islande, by PIERRE LOTI, edited with Notes, Exercises, and Vocabulary by JAMES F. MASON. New York, Holt, 1920.

A third school-edition of the same French text, unless measurably better than its predecessors, would be a work of supererogation. Professor Mason, however, fulfills the condition; his version of *Pêcheur d'Islande*, a distinct improvement upon Super's,¹ promises to be the best for those whose chief business with the book is linguistic (assuming, *dato non concessio*, that it is wise to make this use of a work so delicate in literary texture). Peirce's² remains the best for those whose interest is in Loti's art.

Mason alone provides pedagogical apparatus: *Questionnaire, Exercices, Sujets de Composition, Lettres à écrire*. The material is not copious; for the student who should prepare three pages of the text there would be on the average one grammatical problem and four or five opportunities to formulate in French replies to simple questions. But the editor means to be "suggestive rather than exhaustive," and, as a point of departure, what he offers should prove valuable to the drill-master. The Vocabulary has the appearance of being well done; *à vue* (p. 94, l. 7) and *ou bien* (p. 104, l. 5) should, however, be included, "keep" is correct, but not illuminating, for *garder* (cf. p. 92, l. 14), and "ridiculous" takes somewhat from the flavor of *impayable* (p. 62, l. 14).³ The Notes are, necessarily, reminiscent of those of Peirce and Super, although less numerous. One or two seem exceptionable: to explain *entre deux eaux* by "Cf. *nager entre deux eaux*, 'to swim under water,'" will not enlighten the tyro;⁴ "girl of good birth" is not a proper translation for *demoiselle* in the context (p. 14, l. 20);⁵ *vielle* is not explained at all, although surely a laconic "hurdy-gurdy" in the Vocabulary is not adequate for young Americans.

In the Notes, and elsewhere, Mason evidently does not attempt to compete with Peirce. The Notes of the Peirce edition, it is worth while to remark, have a quality which both other editions lack, and offer, concerning the Breton setting, information directly useful in appreciating the story. Indeed Peirce's work here ap-

¹ Heath, 1902.

² Ginn, 1913.

³ Cf. British "priceless."

⁴ Super's note is more explicit.

⁵ Although Peirce gives the same translation. Why not: "In spite of her cap she did not look like a peasant girl"?

proaches, in degree of excellence, that of Baldensperger in his edition of *Les Traits éternels de la France* (Barrès),⁶ a model of this kind of elucidation, and Peirce's Introduction partakes of the same quality, being an elaborate and deft appraisal of the art of Loti such as neither of the other two editors has undertaken.

Less concerned with *Pêcheur d'Islande* as literature, Mason has been less unwilling than Peirce to cut the text. A comparison of the three abridgements with the original edition of 1886 is revealing. With Super it is a case of mutilation; he has slashed mercilessly, not even preserving the chapter divisions and daring not only to omit but to revise. Mason seems to have followed the lead of Super to some extent, but he has on the whole shown a greater respect for the artist's creation. In view of the exigencies of time and decorum (*ad usum delphini*, Mason puts it), it would be unfair to reprehend Mason's performance, although the fact remains that Peirce's is the only version which offers anything like an integral text. Not infrequently Mason omits paragraphs which contribute appreciably to an understanding of the characters or to an enjoyment of the picturesque environment (cf. p. 9, l. 3; p. 16, l. 25; p. 18, l. 28; p. 43, l. 22; etc.). These are cases where decorum could not have been an issue. Would it not be better, since teachers will continue to demand short texts, to omit more frequently entire chapters, to offer a smaller number of chapters but intact, in their purity,—taking those which are, for the *delphinus*, pure? ⁷

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⁶ Yale Press, 1918.

⁷ Misprints are few except in the Notes. The following have been remarked: p. v, l. 18, read "opportunities"; facing p. 54, *bretons*; Notes, p. 157 (2, 14), *elle avait dû*; (2, 19), *du pantalon*; p. 158 (8, 16), *Marguerite*; p. 159 (18, 7), *faisait*; (19, 22), delete *en*; p. 160 (43, 9), read *du*; (50, 3), *Loguivy*; p. 162 (94, 31), delete *en*; (123, 22), read "him"; p. 165, l. 24, *Quel*; p. 169, l. 1, *reculèrent*; p. 170, l. 22, *fallait*.